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ABSTRACT

The purposes of this teaching manual are to provide teachers with writing assignments related to the justice system and to generate newspaper materials for JUST-US. JUST-US is a newspaper written by and for students studying the justice system in the United States. Eight issues are published during the school year and distributed to law-related education classes in 13 states. The manual contains teaching strategies, 14 student assignments, and student guidelines for submitting articles to JUST-US. Student assignments include writing feature articles, fiction, news stories, editorials, conducting interviews, survey and opinion polls, and writing articles for a consumer law column. Students are also assigned to teach a law-related topic. The assignment includes listing objectives, materials used, teaching strategy, evaluation methods, and follow-up activities. Case studies, a "Dear Abby" column, photography, and cartooning are also included. Each assignment presents the purpose, specific instructions for students, and provides a framework in which to carry out the assignment. (KC)

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JUST-US IS YOU!

(Teacher's Manual)

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JUST-US IS YOU Teacher's Manual, written by Karen DeMunbrun, edited by Todd Clark and Carolyn Pereira.

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INTRODUCTION

JUST-US - What Is It?

JUST-US is a newspaper primarily written by and for students who are studying the justice system in the United States. It is one component of a course of study on the legal system. The paper contains up-to-date feature articles on the justice system, question and answer columns written by experts in the field, puzzles and classroom activities which you will find useful as a supplement to your classroom text(s). Approximately eight issues will be published during the school year and distributed to law-related education classes in thirteen states--California, Connecticut, Illinois, Louisiana, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Wisconsin.

JUST-US is also a forum which provides students the opportunity to share their knowledge and learning experiences concerning the justice system with other young people across the nation.

Rationale

Essay questions, written reports and other writing assignments are not foreign to most students and teachers. They are an accepted means by which to determine a student's knowledge of the subject matter. However, often the grade on the paper does not reflect a student's actual knowledge but rather his/her memorization skills or ability to write what the teacher wants to read. As a result, many students do not develop their full potential as writers, communicators, and original thinkers. Writing, for these students, is often viewed as a painful struggle.

Social studies and law-related education provide an interesting framework in which to encourage students to develop and enhance their writing skills. This manual contains alternative writing assignments and activities designed to make writing fun and a worthwhile challenge.

A Writing Project

The purpose of this manual is twofold: 1) to provide teachers with writing assignments related to the justice system which may be used as an integral part of a course of study and 2) to generate newspaper materials for JUST-US.

The writing assignments and activities contained within this manual are to be used in the manner most appropriate for you and your students. Listed below are some possibilities:

- Certain assignments within the manual lend themselves to special projects either by an individual or by groups of students.

- Materials which stem from the writing assignments may inspire your students to develop their own newspaper for distribution in their school or district.
- Information gained through researching and writing may stimulate students to "peer teach" what they have learned. Peer teaching is a method of instruction whereby students develop their own lesson plans and teach a class of their peers or younger students.
- Students may submit their feature stories, puzzles, editorials, etc. to the local city newspaper.
- Articles and other materials having national appeal may be submitted to JUST-US.

* *

TEACHING STRATEGIES

We hope you will incorporate writing assignments, in general, and writing for JUST-US, in particular, into your course of study in the manner you feel is most effective. We believe this project gives you a chance to:

1) Have students write primarily for an audience of their peers and not solely for the teacher. This will enable the student writer's focus to shift from writing for the teacher and "making the grade" to creating original materials that are relevant to other young people.

Suggested strategies

a) Reading assignments aloud.

b) Circulating assignments in small groups with attached comment sheets to allow students to read other students' work and provide them with critical responses. (Students' papers can be coded with a numbering or lettering system so that critical responses may be impartial.)

When using a peer audience it is important that you set a tone of respect for writers and their writing. Help students realize that the more effectively a person uses language the more able he/she is to communicate. Discourage negative criticism by training students to offer useful and constructive responses to their fellow writers. Responses and criticism should be as specific as possible. For example, rather than "I liked it," "I like it because the examples you gave really showed me how the victims felt" is much more constructive. You may find it necessary to provide your students with specific questions to use in discussing the writings. For example, "What point is the writer trying to make?" or "How does the author try to convince you that he is right?" or "What sentences are unclear to you?"

In order to make the peer audience experience as valid as possible it is important that students realize that teacher comments carry no more weight than students' comments. One way to facilitate this is for the teacher to refrain from making evaluative comments during class discussion, remaining in the role of moderator. Also consider writing the assignments yourself, allowing the students to read and respond to your writing just as they do their own. In any case, it is crucial that the student audience responses be viewed by the writer as important and meaningful.

2) Eliminate all letter grades on writing assignments and use the Pass/Fail system. Concentrate on the creative and informational aspect of the story. Don't overlook grammatical errors but avoid going overboard with a red marking pen!

3) Stimulate student interest in writing news articles, fiction stories and other materials by having them read student written articles in a current issue of JUST-US. Suggest that they too research an issue or issues which interest them and write a story which may be submitted to a local paper or to JUST-US.

4) Have students keep individual notebooks throughout the year on "JUST-US Is You!" which would contain duplicated "Student Guidelines" (pages found in this manual) completed assignments, newspaper clippings that have special meaning, future story ideas, names and numbers of resource people who visited the class, etc. A notebook similar to a news writer's clipping file may develop.

JUST-US FEATJRES

FEATURE ARTICLES ON CRIMINAL AND CIVIL JUSTICE

A feature story is interpretive. The reporter interprets the facts for the reader by analyzing their effects and impact on many related aspects of life. The slant of a feature article varies with the writer's interpretation of the event or issue. For example, a story on the unauthorized immigration of a Mexican family to the United States could either be sympathetic, condescending or antagonistic depending upon the writer's viewpoint and the message he/she wishes to communicate.

Assignment:

Have your students read a local newspaper for one or two weeks and pay close attention to local or national issues relating to criminal and/or civil justice. Ask them to save all articles, cartoons, editorials, etc. relating to an event or issue which interests them. Then assign them the task of writing their own interpretation or at least a differing interpretation from the ones they have read. Your more industrious and motivated students may want to do additional research and conduct an interview(s) to help them answer "unanswered" questions or fill in information they feel is lacking.

FICTION FEATURES

Fiction features are an entertaining means by which to communicate news and public opinions. Encourage your students to write short stories and fictional anecdotes. It is advisable that the student writer's attempts at fiction writing not be graded and that peer audience response and teacher comments be used instead. This approach to evaluation will be less likely to discourage a student.

Assignments:

1. Give students two characters and assign them the task of writing a dialogue between the two that sounds as if real people are talking (Sample pairs: A teenager and a policeman, a lawyer and a client, a parent and his child who has just been arrested, an angry consumer and the manager of a store.) Have pairs of students tape record the scripts and let the class listen and critique them.

2. Give students a situation involving a legal issue or accident. Sketch the characters briefly. Have students select one of the characters and tell a story from that character's point of view.

   Example

   The situation: Jim tells his mother he believes Luke is thinking about joining a gang. Louise knows that Luke's best friend is a member of the gang that may be responsible for most of the vandalism at school.

   Jim: 19 years old; high school graduate; works in a factory; lives at home and is saving money to get an apartment of his own.

   Luke: Jim's brother; 13 years old; small for his age; has trouble in school because he can't read.

   Louise: their mother; a widow; works for the phone company.

3. Select a newspaper article which involves a law-related case. Give students the article and have them write short stories based on it. Explain that many writers use factual incidents for story ideas. Encourage students to think about emotions induced by law-related incidents--fear, anger, hatred, etc. Share the stories in class.

   Possible follow-up: Invite someone to class who was involved in the situation described in the newspaper story. Let the class ask questions and discuss the incident with the resource person, and perhaps share their stories with him or her.

4. Suggest that students visit locations such as courtroom, probation officer's office, jail, lawyer's office, etc. to observe the physical details. They may take notes and perhaps sketch. (Photographs may not be allowed. Check first.) Then have them write a story which begins with a description of the physical setting.

5. The following are final lines to stories. Write the stories that lead up to the endings.

   (a) He looked at the judge's face for some sign of emotion, but he saw nothing.

   (b) She returned to her office to finish reviewing the Andrews case, and there was a hideous tangerine convertible parked in her space.

   (c) As the officers stepped into the hall, it was all I could do to keep from shouting, "You blind fools!"

   (d) If anyone cared to look, a beautifully tended garden was visible from the small window of the cell.

6. Have your students write a futuristic perception of the legal system.

NEWS STORIES

A news story is strictly informative. It states the facts surrounding the incident(s)--the individuals involved and why, where, how and when it occurred. The slant of the news story is factual. It usually states the most important fact first.

Assignment:

Stage an argument or a scene of violence between yourself and another school staff member in front of the class. The students should not be aware that it's an act. After the altercation is finished and you are alone with the class ask each student to write a detailed account of what happened. The writing will vary greatly and a discussion of the variations can reveal a great deal about point of view and accuracy of eyewitness accounts.

EDITORIALS

Editorials are subjective. They differ from the news and feature stories in that they purposefully reflect personal opinion. The bias in the editorial section of the paper need not be subtle. This section gives editors, newspaper writers and other citizens in the community the chance to express their opinions. This may be done through letters to the editor, humorous anecdotes, special feature stories, political cartoons, etc.

The editorial section of the newspaper is also a forum for campaigning whereby concerned citizens can urge others to vote for a candidate or support a cause.

Student opinions expressed in writing may be very effective in situations where students feel uncomfortable discussing certain issues. Such issues might be racial equality, child abuse, suicide incidents involving peer pressure, the Equal Rights Amendment, etc. In tense or uncomfortable situations students can write their opinions and have them read anonymously to the class. Even if discussion does not result, the students will have had the chance to communicate their opinions to one another. You may wish to center the discussion on the effectiveness of the writing rather than on the sensitive issue.

Assignments:

1. Ask students to answer specific, open-ended questions--questions that have many answers--and support their answers with specific reasons that are clearly thought out. Have students read and respond to some or all of the writings.

Sample open-ended questions:

Should television be censored? If so, by whom?

Should students be involved in decisions about courses offered in high school?

Should a high school newspaper be permitted to print an advertisement for

an X-rated movie?

Should a landlord have the right to refuse to rent an apartment to a family with children?

2. Using open-ended questions of opinion, assign half the class the task of writing papers in which they support one side of an issue. Give their finished papers to the other half of the class. The students in the second half will argue against the opinion written on the paper they receive. Duplicate selected pairs of papers for the class to read and discuss or have pairs of students read their papers aloud.

3. Have your students write a letter to the editor of the school or local paper on an issue which has been discussed in class.

   Sample Issues:

   Local ordinance banning outdoor rock concerts

   Local police crackdown on massage parlors

   School policy on open campus

   Student involvement in teacher evaluation process

   18 year olds and the rights to drink, vote and the draft

4. Assign students the task of reading the editorials in the school or local newspaper. Ask them to select an editorial with which they disagree and to write a rebuttal--an editorial expressing their opposing view.

INTERVIEWS

The purpose of an interview is to get facts and quotations for a story. Interviews can take the form of a "man on the street" interview or a professional opinion.

If the person to be interviewed is a professional, the student and/or teacher will have to make some phone calls. The phone calls should explain where the caller is from and the nature of the project. Either ask for a classroom visit or an interview appointment. If the interview is to be with friends, students, or simply a "man on the street" interview, naturally not as much advance notice is necessary.

Have the interviewers prepare the main questions before the interviews. It is helpful to know something about the person, event or issue to be investigated before doing the actual questioning. This will help keep the tone of the interview conversational, and allow the interviewee to feel relaxed. Each question should be carefully revised until it is clear and precise. For example, "What is your opinion of plea bargaining?" is a pretty vague question that may elicit several different answers. "Under what circumstances will you plea bargain a case for a client?" is more specific and clear. The day of the interview, the interviewers should have prepared questions in front of them. This saves time and allows them to keep track of whether all their questions are being answered. Students should be encouraged to ask spontaneous questions if the person raises unanticipated points or doesn't answer a question clearly. Caution students to listen carefully so they won't ask questions the person has already answered.

General Reminders to the Students

1. Arrive on time for interview appointments and dress appropriately.
2. If the interviewee visits the class, start promptly.
3. Be polite and avoid argument which may block communication.
4. Do not be so preoccupied with taking notes and asking questions that you

forget to observe the interviewee. Subtle body language, eye contact, and tone of voice can tell you a great deal about the person and make the story more colorful and interesting.

5. Ask permission if planning to use a tape recorder or camera.
6. Follow up the interview with a thank-you letter.

Interviewing by Mail

The students may wish to interview someone who is not located in the area. In this case they will need to write a letter asking for information. These letters should not be vague general requests for, "All the information you have on prisons..." but rather they should be carefully planned questions on a specific subject. It would not be wise for students in the same class to write to the same person as this would decrease the chance of receiving an answer. Students should save copies of their letters so that when the answers come back the pair of letters can be studied to see if the questions were answered as expected. This would be a good opportunity to discuss the effectiveness of two-way written communication as opposed to verbal.

Assignment:

Your students may like to write to a prison administrator, state legislators, probation officers, prison inmates, judges, law enforcement officials, local elected officials, etc. An article could contain a summary of the letter(s) written and excerpts of responses plus comments on those responses.

SURVEYS AND OPINION POLLS

A survey can be a valuable research tool if planned carefully. It is a good way to find out facts and the opinions of individuals and interest groups in the community.

As in the case of all research projects, if students are trying to find out something they really want to know, the project will be more successful than if they are answering questions provided by the teacher.

Assignment:

Have your students conduct a survey or opinion poll.

The Process

I. First the issues involved and the answers sought must be clarified. It is important to keep the scope of the project within manageable limits. In the survey mentioned above, the group could try to find out:

---What percentage of young people (ages 12-22) in the sample think marijuana should be legalized?

---What are their reasons?

---What percentage of young people in the sample think marijuana should not be legalized?

---What are their reasons?

II. The next task is to formulate questions for the survey.

A. The language and vocabulary should be appropriate for the sample of people being surveyed. Try to pick words that have the same meaning for everyone. "Marijuana" would be a better choice than "pot" or "weed."

B. All terms should be defined clearly and specifically. In the example, the words "young" and "legalize" need to be defined clearly.

C. Avoid long questions which may confuse the respondents.

D. Establish a frame of reference.

Don't ask: Should marijuana be legalized?

Ask: Should buying marijuana for personal use be against the law? Should selling marijuana be against the law? Should the government regulate the sale of marijuana?

E. Decide whether to use a direct or indirect question.

Direct: Have you smoked marijuana?

Indirect: What percentage of your friends smoke marijuana?

0% - 10%

11% - 30%

31% - 50%

51% - 75%

76% - 99%

100%

F. Decide whether the question should be open or closed.

Open: Tell me your opinion of the following statement.

"Marijuana is harmful to people who smoke it daily."

_____

_____

_____

Closed: "Marijuana is harmful to people who smoke it daily."

Definitely agree

Somewhat agree

Don't know -- undecided

Somewhat disagree

Definitely disagree

G. Phrase questions so they are not necessarily objectionable.

Don't Ask: Did you graduate from high school?

Ask: What is the highest grade in school you completed?

H. Questions should be limited to a single idea.

Don't Ask: Do you think people who use marijuana become dependent on the drug and lose interest in their responsibilities?

Ask: Do you think some people who use marijuana become dependent on the drug?

Do you think some people who use marijuana lose interest in their responsibilities?

I. Keep the questionnaire anonymous unless there is a specific reason why the students will need the name of the person answering the questionnaire.

III. The next task is to organize the questionnaire.

A. Start with easy questions that the person responding to the survey will enjoy answering.

B. Topics and questions should be arranged so that they make the most sense to the person who is answering the survey.

C. Open-ended questions which require the most thought and writing should be kept to a minimum. Generally, these should be placed at the end to assure that the closed questions will be answered.

IV. The next task is to administer the questionnaire.

A. Have the students take the questionnaire themselves and try it out on three or four other people. This will help them pinpoint confusing questions and will indicate approximately how long it takes to answer them.

B. Decide on a manageable number of respondents and plan how they will be surveyed.

C. When administering the questionnaire to a group of people the students administering the survey should introduce themselves, explain the reason for the survey, comment on how the responses will be used and whether or not the results will be published after they are compiled.

D. Administering the survey to an individual on the street requires different strategies. Students will have to read the questionnaire orally and write the appropriate responses on the sheet as the person answers. When approaching a stranger, the students should introduce themselves, explain the purpose of the survey, and ask the individual whether he/she would mind spending a few minutes to help them complete their project. If the respondent is reluctant, students need not persist. Also participants should be aware that their names will not be used.

If your students wish to poll the attitudes of 12-22 year olds, as in the case of the example above, they will need to find equal numbers of people from each age in the group. Social studies classes at a local college, junior college or technical school may provide additional respondents to the survey or opinion poll.

Records of sources of respondents should be kept and details about the sample should be included with the date in any written report about the survey.

CONSUMER LAW COLUMN

This column will contain relevant questions and answers related to consumer law.

Example:

Question: If you have a complaint against your attorney which can't be settled by agreement you should: a) complain to the governor of your state, b) forget it, because attorneys never make mistakes, c) consult your state or local bar association, or d) immediately file a law suit.

Answer: c) Attorneys are human and do make mistakes. Most problems that arise between a client and a lawyer can be solved by discussion and agreement. However, if you have a complaint that cannot be resolved, you should consult your state or local bar association. Such organizations have procedures for investigating charges of wrongdoing by attorneys.

While studying the area of consumer law you and your students will probably discover areas which you would like to research further or questions you would like answered. Your local Department of Consumer Affairs is an excellent resource to call upon.

Assignment:

Pair up your students in teams of two. Each student will write a consumer law question for the other student. Circulate all questions and answers to each member of the class and allow your students to choose the most appropriate questions and answers to submit to Just-Us or any other publication.

REVIEWS

A review serves three purposes--it is an announcement of a cultural happening in the community, a summary of the contents of the happening and a critique. It lets people know what's going on and whether or not it is worthwhile. Reviews may be written of books, movies, recordings, concerts, art exhibits, plays, political rallies and lectures.

The following checklist describes the various components a reviewer should include in his or her critique of a cultural happening:

1. Are the contents of the book, play, movie, etc. outlined minimally but also enough so readers can determine whether or not they would be interested?
2. Did you evaluate the happening in terms of the technique used? For example, if a movie was reviewed attention should be paid to scenery, characterization, plot, dialogue and acting abilities.
3. Was the happening entertaining, depressing, educational, fun, boring?
4. Did you like or dislike the happening? Why?

Assignment:

1. Have your students read a book or magazine article dealing with a law-related issue and write a review. All book reviews written in class can be duplicated and used to develop a bibliography of recommended books.
2. Have your students look through the entertainment section of the local newspaper for a cultural happening they would be interested in attending. Have them write a paragraph describing what they would expect to experience. After they have attended the event have them write a review which compares their expectations with what really happened.

TEACH IT

This section of Just-Us describes a factual case or situation and outlines actual lesson plans that your students can teach to their own or another class.

Assignment:

1. Assign your students the task of developing a lesson plan for teaching a law-related topic. The following is a basic outline for a lesson plan:

Title of the Topic

Objectives. What is it you want to accomplish? What do you want the students--those being taught--to learn or gain from the experience?

Materials Used. (Chalkboard, handouts, special exhibits, etc.)

Teaching Strategy. How will you present the lesson? What steps are involved?

Evaluation. How will you determine whether or not your objectives have been met?

Follow-up. Will there be an activity, lesson, quiz, visit from a resource person to follow up the lesson?

2. After your students have "peer taught" their lesson have them write a short paragraph describing the experience. Select the most appropriate paragraph(s) and submit it with the lesson plan.

YOU BE THE JUDGE - A CASE STUDY

This segment will contain an open-ended factual or fictional case study having to do with real-life legal situations that affect young people. The case study will be followed by provocative discussion questions. It should be developed as a classroom activity which would involve a community resource person who would share his or her expertise and knowledge with the class.

Assignment:

There may be areas of law that your students or their friends have had experience with that they find confusing and frustrating. Have them write a factual or fictional account of the event. Questions that are raised in the story should be included at the end. These questions could inspire students to conduct research and interviews which would lead to the writing of a criminal or civil justice feature.

THE RIGHTS OF YOUTH

This column is similar to a "Dear Abby" column. Students may address questions concerning their legal rights to an expert in the field. Pertinent questions and answers will be published.

Assignment:

Ask your students if they have any questions concerning their legal rights. Inform them that their questions may be anonymous. Possible areas of concern might emancipation of minors, contracts and responsibilities, school discipline, age of consent, and child abuse.

PHOTOGRAPHS, ILLUSTRATIONS

Photographs are a good accompaniment to a news story. A good action shot can draw a reader's attention to a story and clarify the facts. Action shots are much more interesting than "mug shots" which portray only a person's face and shoulders. However, if this type of picture is needed the subject should be asked to look at a focal point away from the camera lens. When possible, pose the subject so it looks like he or she is doing something related to the story.

In the caption under the picture, identify the subject in the photo. If it is a group picture the people should be identified from left to right with all names and titles spelled accurately. If the picture does not speak for itself it will need a descriptive sentence or paragraph.

Artistic illustrations are another excellent means by which to depict an issue, event and opinion.

Assignment:

Have students with an interest in photography or illustration team up with student writers to do a feature story. Students could also develop a photographic or illustrative composition which describes the various processes within the judicial system, for example, arrest and the booking procedure, the intake process at a prison, the steps in a trial, etc.

PUZZLES, GAMES

Encourage your students to try their hands at developing puzzles and classroom games which relate to the content area they are studying.

Assignment:

Crossword Puzzle. Students will need graph paper to complete this assignment. Have them choose at least twenty (20) words that relate to the concept of criminal or civil depending on what you are studying. They should then define these words. They will then plot them on the paper and develop a crossword puzzle. It is helpful to start with the longest word first and place it in the middle of the page allowing the other words to "grow" from it. The resultant puzzles may be shared with students in other classes and/or published.

HUMOR, CARTOONS

Humorous stories and cartoons are a good means by which to express a political viewpoint and opinion concerning current events.

Assignment:

Instruct your students to look at samples of cartoons in the editorial section of the local newspaper and to notice how the cartoons portray the physical features of the environment and prominent people in the news. Ask them to pick an issue which concerns them and develop a cartoon or picture. The front page of the paper is a good place to find an issue.

STUDENT GUIDELINES

JUST-US IS YOU

JUST-US is a youth newspaper written by and for students who are studying the justice system in the United States. During the school year, approximately eight issues containing articles and features developed by students will be published and distributed to law-related education classes in thirteen different states—California, Connecticut, Illinois, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Michigan, New York, Virginia, North Carolina, Mississippi, Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Louisiana. We encourage you to submit materials to JUST-US for publication. These guidelines should give you some idea of ways you could be a contributor.

You may contribute news items to JUST-US in any or all of the following categories. When deciding which materials will be submitted consider whether or not the materials have national appeal. For example, an article on the marriage of the high school principal to the Chief of Police would not be of national interest. A story about an innovative delinquency prevention program in your county would have a greater chance of being published. An article you send to JUST-US may not be considered for publication when you submit it. Because of the relevance of your article to a specific topic, it may be included in a later issue.

The following is a general list of categories of contributions. These should guide you but not restrict you. If you have an idea which doesn't seem to fit anywhere here, but does match the focus and tone of Just-Us, please send it. All page lengths indicated refer to 8½" x 11" double-spaced, typewritten pages, on one side of the page only.

* * * * * * * * * *

Criminal Justice or Civil Justice Feature - a 3-5 page article which focuses on a specific aspect of the criminal or civil justice system. Sample objects: a crime from the victim's point of view, an interview with a juvenile court judge, the impact of Title IX on high school athletic programs, a look at a corporation run and owned by teenagers. Make your article as detailed and specific as you can. No matter how general the legal area that your article touches, the article itself must be narrowed down to specific examples in order to be interesting to your audience.

Fiction Feature - 3-5 page short stories, vignettes, character sketches and tales which are related in theme or subject matter to justice and the law. Don't overlook the areas of science fiction and fantasy literature which offer great opportunities to explore justice and the law from different perspectives.

News Stories- 3-5 pages; strictly informative stating the facts surrounding the incidents and should include the answers to who, why, where, when and how it occurred.

Editorials - 1-2 page statement of personal opinion in which you discuss or interpret an event, issue or happening. Be sure to select a subject which will be law-related and of interest to a nationwide audience. Support your general statements of opinion with specific reasons and facts.

Interviews - 2-3 pages; write to or speak with someone who is an authority on a law-related subject (prison administrator, probation officer, judge, congressman, prison inmate, consumer advocate, etc.). Request specific information or the answers to specific questions from him or her. Submit your letter and or the questions and answers you receive to Just-Us.

Surveys and Opinion Polls - 2 pages; a survey can be a valuable research tool and depending on the questions you include, can be of interest to Just-Us readers. Your teacher has materials on how to conduct a survey.

Consumer Law Column - 1-3 pages; your purpose here will be to educate and inform your readers of their rights and/or responsibilities as consumers. In illustrating the point you are trying to make, you should choose specific examples and write about them in detail. Sample subjects: What can we do to raise the quality of t.v. programming? How does shoplifting raise the prices we pay for things?

Book and Film Reviews - up to 1 page; write your reviews assuming that your reader has not read the book or seen the movie. Your own opinion should be a part of your review and should be supported with reasons and examples. It is not necessary (or advisable) in a review of this kind to tell the entire story of the book or movie.

Teach It - 2-4 pages; as a part of your course of study this year, you have been given the opportunity to teach kids your own age or younger. If you have designed materials for this kind of teaching which have been effective, we'd like to publish them. Your lesson plan should be easily understood by the person who will teach from it.

You Be The Judge-A Case Study - an open-ended factual or fictional case study followed by discussion questions to be used with a community resource expert in class.

The Rights of Youth - students may address questions concerning the rights of young people to an expert in the field who will be responsible for this column. Pertinent questions and answers will be published.

Photographs - You may want to submit photos to accompany a story you have written. Action shots are preferable to "mug shots". In the caption under the picture, identify the subject of your photo. If you have a group picture, identify the people from left to right, spelling all names and titles accurately.

If you are a photographer, you may wish to submit a photographic essay, a group of photos which tell a story or make a point with little or no text.

All photos should be black and white, glossy and at least 3" x 5". Tape the caption to the bottom white edge of the photo. Protect the photo for mailing with cardboard backing on both sides. Mark the outside of the envelope "Fragile".

Puzzles, Games, Brain Teasers - crossword puzzles, double crostics, word games, etc. using words found in the study of justice and the law. Logical problems and conundrums are also accepted. (Sample: There was a single eye-witness to a murder who testified against the murderer. Her testimony was convincing and the murderer was convicted of first degree murder. The jury sentenced the convicted murderer to be executed, but there was no way the judge could ever order the sentence to be carried out, even though the murderer was alive. The murderer was then set free. Why? (Answer: the murderer was a Siamese twin).

Cartoons - Humor - 1-3 frames based on law-related situation or themes; jokes, one-liners, quips, puns, anecdotes from 1 line to 1 paragraph in length.

Some General Reminders

Contributions need not be pieces of writing you have written just for the purpose of sending to Just-Us. They can be things you have written for your class. They also need not be the work of a single writer. Group or class projects may also be submitted.

Before submitting a piece of writing, try it out on some students in your class. Ask them to tell you what parts of your article they think are good and which parts need work. Ask for specific constructive criticism. Taking this kind of criticism isn't always easy, but it usually improves the quality of one's writing.

All material submitted must be the work of the person or persons whose name(s) is/are on it. If you have quoted someone, make certain the name is spelled accurately and include any relevant information such as the person's profession and location. If you quote information from a book or any other written material, use quotation marks and footnote the source quoted. (Your teacher can help you with footnote form.)

Submit articles on 8½" x 11" white paper. They should be typed (double-spaced with 1" margins) or printed legibly (write on every other line). Do not write or type on the back of the paper. Number each page and write "The End" at the end of the article. In the upper left-hand corner of each page include: your name, your teacher's name, your school, city, and state. Photographs should be identified with the photographer's name, teacher's name, school, city, and state.

Send contributions:

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